



PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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Charivaria

It will be gathered from the varying and contradictory German broadcasts that the people of England have nothing to eat but food.

○ ○

German propaganda issues distorted versions of Mr. CHURCHILL's speeches. The FUEHRER's speeches, of course, he distorts himself.

○ ○

Stability in a Changing World

"It was evident that the old custom had lost none of its antiquity."

Western Morning News.

○ ○

A publicity firm is trying to find a man who looks like Dr. GOEBBELS. We can only think of one. Dr. GOEBBELS.

○ ○

A soldier was observed to be fast asleep in his stall at a London theatre. One theory is that before his leave he had been over-entertained by Ensa.

○ ○

There is rationing, tobacco shortage, black-out and A.R.P. in Eire. The inhabitants are beginning to wonder what all the peace is about.

○ ○

It is obvious that food rationing will have to be continued for some time after the war. Grumblers will be countered by the scornful reminder that there's a peace on.

○ ○

"Motor-car racing will be resumed after the war," says a sports writer. The first meeting will seem a little strange when spectators tether their mounts in the old car-park before viewing the events.

We read that some inmates of our prisons pay income-tax. Some didn't.

○ ○

Farm-workers are to wear battle-dress which will be obtainable without coupons. Scarecrows, however, will have to make their mufti do another season.

○ ○

No Accounting for Tastes

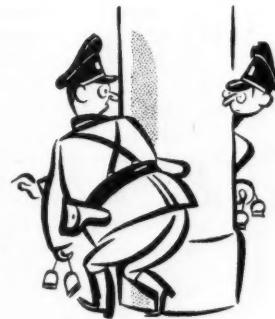
"LADY, with furniture and own cow, desires SHARE modernized HOUSE with another."

Advt. in Daily Paper.

○ ○

Many members of the Gestapo in Germany have been arrested. Some even when they were actually on duty arresting members of the Gestapo.

○ ○



"I have noticed that for some time back there are fewer mice in the house but more in the fields," says a country correspondent. Since cheese rationing they probably eat out.

○ ○

With the need for further newspaper economy passengers on the tube railways have grown quite used to sharing their fellow-passengers' morning paper with the man opposite.

○ ○

The B.B.C. start their items exactly on time. What puzzles many listeners is that broadcast plays so often finish a side and a half of a gramophone record too soon.

○ ○



HITLER is reported to be sleeping badly. It is feared in certain Nazi circles that he is counting black sheep in the Party.

Austerity

(*"I have always," writes the Military Correspondent of "The Times" to the Editor of that journal, "disliked the nouns which pose as adjectives. . . . What have the sub-editors to say about 'austerity' meals? . . . This abomination may have come to stay, like others, but I have made up my mind. . . . I may be compelled, much as I shall hate it, to lead an austere life for the duration, but nothing in the world, not even Lord Woolton, can compel me to lead an austerity life."*)

WHEN the leaves of tea are falling
Softly in my pot for tea,
And the spoon o' sugar's calling
And the jug o' milk to me,
Far away from battle's clamour
And the sound of war's alarms
I reflect on English grammar
Sitting in my chair at arms.

Plague on those who try to tether
In the foulness of their heart
Two poor substantives together
That were meant to live apart!
"Rail and way are joined to station"
Often have I moaned in vain
As I missed my transportation
By a locomotive train.

"By what horrible communion
When the bombs begin to thump
Does our language make the union
Of the stirrup with the pump?"
This and things like this I wonder
As I take my morning tramps
Past the bags of sand put under
Posts for holding up the lamps.

Fire o' guns, nocturnal fighters
Keep us in the nights o' moons!
Less may be achieved by writers
Than by barrage of balloons;
Still to check the wild insanity
That would make our speech less clear
Pilgrim in a Fair of Vanity
I at least remain austere.

EVOE.

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Journey's End

THE man in the corner returned from his inspection of the train, looking depressed. I guessed why. People still travel who do not know that restaurant cars are a thing of the past. And those who do know have, as a result, to consider when they pack not only the extent to which they must cater for their own meals on the journey, but how much they will have to give away when they dare open their packets.

I looked at the man in the corner suspiciously and put mine out of sight.

People were sleeping in the corridors. Over their bodies the man in the corner had evidently stepped every yard

of the way up the train, then back in disgust. But by remarkable self-restraint he now made no comment on his hunger, opening instead an altogether different subject.

"No woman," he said, "ever fell in love, surely, with a man whom she saw for the first time asleep in a railway train."

After thought I agreed with him. In the case of innocent little children and lovely women the closing of the eyes in sleep produces a softening effect upon me, but it certainly does not in the case of gentlemen.

"It strikes me as rather silly of people," said the other, "not to take lessons in this kind of thing from experts. The great artist in sleep is the domestic cat. Now, who has ever seen a cat attempting to sleep by sitting bolt upright, then allowing itself to sag to one side, roll its eyes upward, open its mouth till its teeth nearly fall out, and finally collapse in such a contortion that the sheer agonizing discomfort of it actually wakes up the cat?

"Cats know better than that, and for a darned good reason. They realize human beings only permit them to be in the room at all because they dress the scene. A cat on the hearthrug is all part of the décor of the home, as is a kettle on the hob and slippers by the chair, and the cat is only allowed there if it can fulfil its function; in fact if you pluck the animal out of one chair and toss it into another you will find it drops into a naturally graceful attitude on impact, *solely to keep its job*. If it did not it would be kicked outside into the bitter blast and the door slammed after it. Nothing would more seriously unsettle me by my fireside than to look up from my paper and find the cat looking as if its neck had been broken yesterday and nobody had removed the body yet.

"Well, you ought to take a walk up this corridor. You will find every man whose eyes are closed is looking like that now. And man gets away with it."

I submitted that not all animals set an example in this respect. Horses, for example, sleep standing up. What is the big idea in that?

"That," said the other, "is because they acquire the knack in carts and cabs, and when the shafts are taken away on Sunday the horse does not realize the difference."

"Then why doesn't he fall over?"

"There are really two sorts of people," said the other, disregarding my best point in a rather annoying way—"those who cannot go to sleep and those who cannot keep awake, and if neither can suit his feeling to the needs of the moment, after a lifetime spent in trying, it does seem a dreadful commentary on human will-power and inventiveness. I knew a man who went three times to see the same film and always began to snore just when it reached the point which interested him. Try as he would to keep awake, sleep always overcame him at the same point, with the result that he never really saw the film and had to give up hoping to.

"As a matter of fact," he added, "there is only one thing that causes me more annoyance than the appearance of the fellow who is hunched on the floor just outside this door; and that is the certainty that I have seen him before eating haddock in Lyons' Corner House with his hat on."

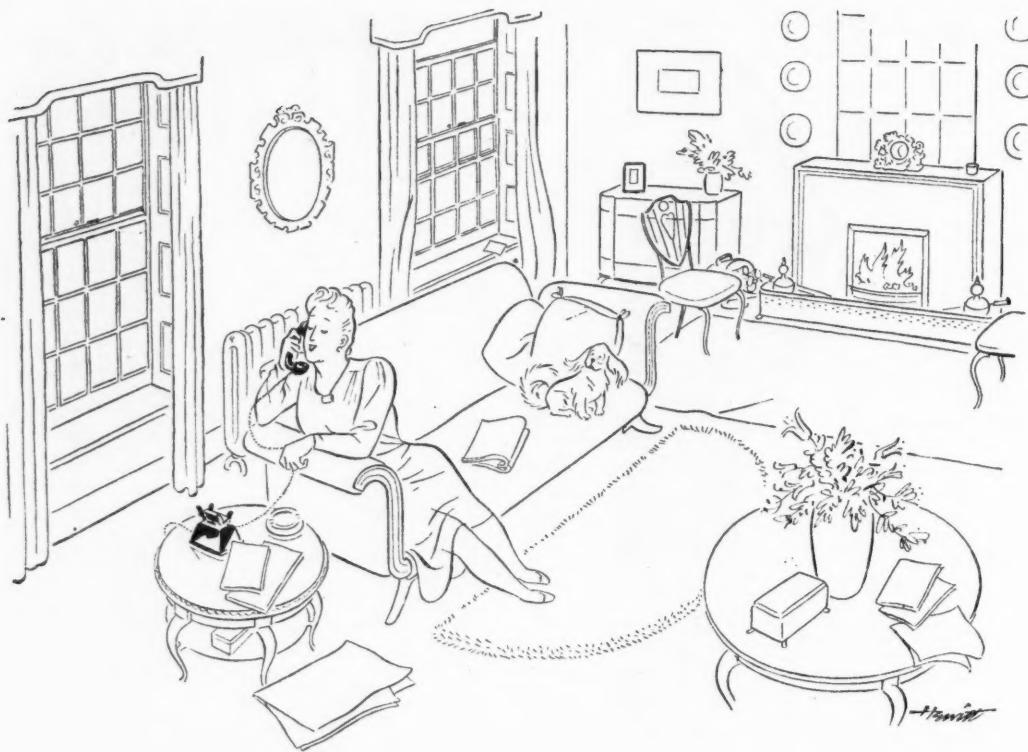
"Well," he ended as he rose to collect his belongings, "this is where I get out."

"Oh!" I said in surprise. "I thought you had been trying to get dinner on the train."

"Good heavens, no!" he explained. "I promised to wake some fellow up when I got to Balgarrie, and although I have been the length of the train I'm blowed if I can tell now which of all those frightful bodies is his. And I can't bring myself to turn them over and see. It's his own fault. Men should be more like my cat."



THE GATE OF INDIA



"And then, my dear, she actually asked me—OVER THE TELEPHONE, mind you—if Charles and his unit really WERE going to the Middle East on Thursday. Of course, I didn't tell her a THING!"

Little Talks

ARE you going to join the "People's Movement"?

No. Are you?

I think so.

Why?

Don't you like the People? Of course. I am very much attached to the People. Queerly enough, I regard myself as one of the People.

Oh, no.

Why not?

Well, you know—

No, I don't. That's why I'm asking. Well, I mean when one talks about a People's War—or a People's Peace—

I never do. But go on.

Well, one doesn't think of people like you.

That's a damn shame. But whom do you think of?

Well, I suppose one would say—the "workers."

You mean the manual workers?

Yes. The wage-earners.

But I write. I type. And I earn

wages for it. At the moment also I steer a boat, I start engines, I make knots, bends and hitches, I splice ropes, and even, with great reluctance, wire. I use anchors, cables and lethal weapons. All this I do with my hands—and the King pays me wages for it—

Yes, but that's not what I mean.

All right. Tell me this. When is a war not a People's War? What is the opposite to a People's War?

Well, you might have a Politicians' War, a war in which—

But the People's Movement has been started by three politicians.

Shut up. Or you might have a Militarist War, where the people weren't really behind it—

Japan?

Yes. Or Germany.

You mean that the German people aren't really behind Hitler?

Not in the war.

That's a new one on me. Do they want to win?

Yes. But I think they wish it had never started.

I dare say. What about the Russians? Is that a People's War?

Of course. Absolutely.

Don't they wish it had never started?

No. Yes. I mean, whatever happens, they're absolutely behind the Government.

I see. Now, what about us? Was the South African War a P.W.?

Certainly not. That was an Imperialist War.

How about "duke's son, cook's son," and so forth?

The people were dragged into it, but they never liked it.

And the last war?

That was a People's War, I think; but it wasn't a People's Peace. All that vindictiveness—the Versailles Treaty—

Half a minute. Surely it was the people who wanted to hang the Kaiser? It was the politicians who stopped that?

I forgot.

If the people had framed the Versailles Treaty it would have been a lot more severe than it was.

Oh, no. The People are generally right.

Are they? What about the Peace Ballot?

Oh, well—

How the People fell for that! And what about all those years when everyone who wanted to build a battleship or drill a cadet was called a "war-monger." Do you remember the Fulham Election? Do you remember how poor old Baldwin said if he'd gone for rearmament he'd have been thrown out?

Yes, but he ought to have had the courage of his con—

Maybe. But the point is, the dear old People were hopelessly wrong, as wrong as the politicians or anyone else. That period was a People's Peace, if you like! Everybody was in it.

Oh, well, if they're not properly led, they can be wrong, of course.

So you might have a People's war that was a bad war?

Unlikely. But you might.

Right. Now, tell me. This is a People's War, isn't it?

It is now.

Why "now"?

Well, I didn't feel that it was at the beginning.

But, my dear fellow, Arthur Greenwood and the Labour Party were just as hot for war as Winston, or anyone. In fact, they'd have liked it to start a day earlier.

Yes, but there wasn't the same sense of all-in-it, somehow.

We began with conscription for all classes—and an Act giving full powers over everyone's property. Perhaps you're thinking of before the blitz?

Perhaps. And, of course, since Russia came in—

Russia? Gracious! If it wasn't a People's War when we were standing alone with our backs to the wall, I don't see why it should suddenly become one because we put up a powerful ally?

Well, the fact is, whether you like it or not, the People are profoundly interested in Russia.

Quite right, too. But I thought that a People's War was one that had the People solid behind it. And I can't see why the People should be more solid against Hitler now than they were, shall we say, when he was blitzing London.

Well, I believe they are.

Perhaps it's the new Government. Tell me, is Winston Churchill one of the People?

No.

But he's always worked. He writes.

He paints. He builds brick walls. He's a manual—

He was at Harrow.

Oh! What about Cripps?

Yes.

But he was at Winchester. And does nothing with his hands.

Well. I'm not sure about him.

Attlee?

No. Cheltenham.

Anthony Eden?

No. Eton.

Oliver Lyttelton?

No. Cambridge.

Not at all. And what happens to me after the war?

You mustn't think about what happens to you after the war.

I thought that was the whole point of the People's Peace.

You may think about what happens to other people after the war.

All right. I frequently do. May I think about what happens to manufacturers after the war?

No.

Ship-owners?

No.

Bankers?

Good Lord—no!

Trade Unionists?

Certainly. We must safeguard their rights and customs.

And wages?

Yes. Freedom from want and fear.

Publishers?

No. Nothing to do with profit.

But I thought you said "wages."

Quite different.

All right. What about writers?

Novelists?

Not sure.

What? No security?

Not unless you're some good.

But, I thought "security" meant you were all right even if you weren't any good?

Not novelists.

Oh, dear. Well, it looks to me as if what you really meant was Some People's War.

Why do you go on about this?

Because I think it's a nonsensical expression.

A. P. H.

ANOTHER

National Waste Paper Contest, on the same lines as the successfully record-breaking one held in January, began on May 1st and closes on July 31st. There are several differences in the conditions. This time boroughs are competing only with boroughs, urban councils with urban councils, and rural councils with rural councils. The total prize-money to be won is £10,000, £2,500 of it in Scotland. The winners will be those local authorities that collect the heaviest weight of waste paper per thousand of the population; and the disposal of the prizes this time is left to the entire discretion of the local authorities concerned. But it is likely that you will still be helping your local charities, as well as the war effort, by

SAVING ALL WASTE PAPER

This is frightful. John Anderson?
No. Edinburgh University. Government House.

Bevin?

Oh, he's all right.

Good. But, you know, this is very serious. Here we are, having a People's War—and only one of the War Cabinet is one of the People.

Oh, well, I didn't say the others were no good.

I'm awfully glad about that. But, look here, what exactly is one's position in a People's War? I mean, ought one to keep out of it, or what?

What d'you mean? Of course, you must do your damnedest!

But I thought you said I wasn't one of the People. Shan't I be in the way?

Maybe. But you can pay your taxes.

Why should I pay my taxes if it isn't my war?

Ass.

Mixed Battery

THE breech is shut; the muzzle creeps up slowly.

An old dog drowses in the sandbags' shade.

Our target climbs, un hurried and unholy.

A syllable will loose the cannonade. The girls stand cool, "as if upon parade,"

Remembering their drill, and I confess Beauty itself doth of itself persuade The eyes of man—in spite of battle-dress.

Enough! This is a tournament with death

(Or so I've read). I therefore hold my breath.

Death comes by bayonet, by club and cleaver,

Death comes in cylinders, in little phials, And Death can be a game of matching dials . . .

I hear a shout: I press the firing-lever.

May 27 1942

At the Pictures**LES OREILLES ENNEMIES VOUS
ÉCOUTENT**

"THE Army is given the best of everything. . . ." But somehow we had been forgetting to apply this time-honoured assertion to the realm of entertainment; indeed, I know a place, and probably you know others, where the cinema - managers are happily saving money by showing cheap old films because whatever they put on, plenty of soldiers and sailors will regularly pay to go and see it. But *The Next of Kin* (Director: THOROLD DICKINSON), which was originally made to be shown to the Army alone, and which only months of free publicity have prevailed on the authorities to release to the rest of us, is one of the best films of its kind I ever saw: exciting, absorbing and amusing as well as most efficient in its aim of bringing home to everybody the dangers of unguardedly passing on some odd scrap of information.

It should bring them home, I think, as well as anything could; to everybody except (for instance) a youth sitting near me, who obviously took the actual Commando raid to be the point of the whole thing and kept muttering "Swines!" under his breath every time a German appeared to be firing a gun. On such immature minds as these I suppose the film will not have its intended effect; it will send them out on the alert to catch German spies who look like MERVYN JOHNS or STEPHEN MURRAY—their suspicions about whom they will probably confide in a low voice to some trusted friend in the hearing of a real German spy disguised as a hedge.

But nobody with any sense at all can fail to grasp the point this film brilliantly explains: that the value to the enemy of a particular small bit of information is not to be judged on your casual estimate, but on what it

might tell him if he put it together with hundreds of others that would separately seem just as trivial. And nobody with any sense at all can fail to take pleasure in this excellently-made, thoroughly entertaining picture.

There is another Commando raid in *The Day Will Dawn* (Director: HAROLD FRENCH), and like the proverbial Marines, it comes just in time for the

RALPH RICHARDSON; a pity he doesn't have more to do.

I enjoyed *The Day Will Dawn*. It covers plenty of ground, by the way: it begins with the beginning of the war, and the title, of course, takes us right up to the end.

Now for a different world, with *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (Director: WILLIAM KEIGHLEY). I gather that

this sticks pretty close to the play, but even so it turns out to be a bright and entertaining film. Not often can one say that of these productions that are in essence photographed plays, where every circumstance proclaims its connection with the stage, from the wide stairs, which people are constantly going up and down, to the standing position half-facing the audience which they tend to assume to say anything important. The charm of this piece resides largely in the rudeness of *Sheridan Whiteside* (MONTY WOOLLEY), to which we listen with the kind of delight often aroused by the sight of someone smashing china. As Mr. IVOR BROWN wrote in these pages a year or so ago, "It is the unintentional vice of drama to present bad manners as good fun."

*[The Man Who Came to Dinner]***OPENING OUT**

<i>Banjo</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>sides</i>	<i>Schnozzle Durante</i>
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<i>MONTY WOOLLEY</i>

hero and heroine. This conventionally melodramatic climax, which rouses a few giggles from the audience, is unfortunate; for most of this film, too, is highly enjoyable and well done. The story is of a dashing foreign correspondent (HUGH WILLIAMS) who parachutes into occupied Norway and signals to our bombers the position of a U-boat base. This is the big scene, but there has been much entertaining stuff to lead up to it, including behind-the-scenes newspaper episodes with journalists much more credible than film journalists usually are (the story is by FRANK OWEN). One of them is

new theme of the wife (or the husband) who has no time for the husband (or the wife). This time the wife is a sort of DOROTHY THOMPSON character and the husband a sporting reporter, and KATHARINE HEPBURN and SPENCER TRACY excellently display their sympathetic qualities. The comic invention—these stories always depend a great deal on the embroidery, the little incidents, the placing of the scenes that carry them along—though not very fresh, is well served by the players, and the whole affair is cheerful, full of good lines, and worth seeing.

R. M.

Passing Out

WHEN the last day of our O.C.T.U. arrived and it became clear that all those of us who had not already been "sent back" were really going to be granted commissions, we noticed with surprise that Cadet Sympson was still among those present. Various theories were put forward to account for the miracle.

"It's what may be called a miscarriage of justice," said Cadet Bainbridge. "You remember that fellow Symington who was returned to his unit about ten days ago? Well, it is quite clear what happened. They got confused between the two names, and no doubt Sympson got Symington's marks and vice versa."

"The officers here," said Cadet Bachelor, "are much too efficient to make a mistake like that. They carry photographs of us about with them all the time, and if they see one of us doing anything silly they take them out and mark us with a cross."

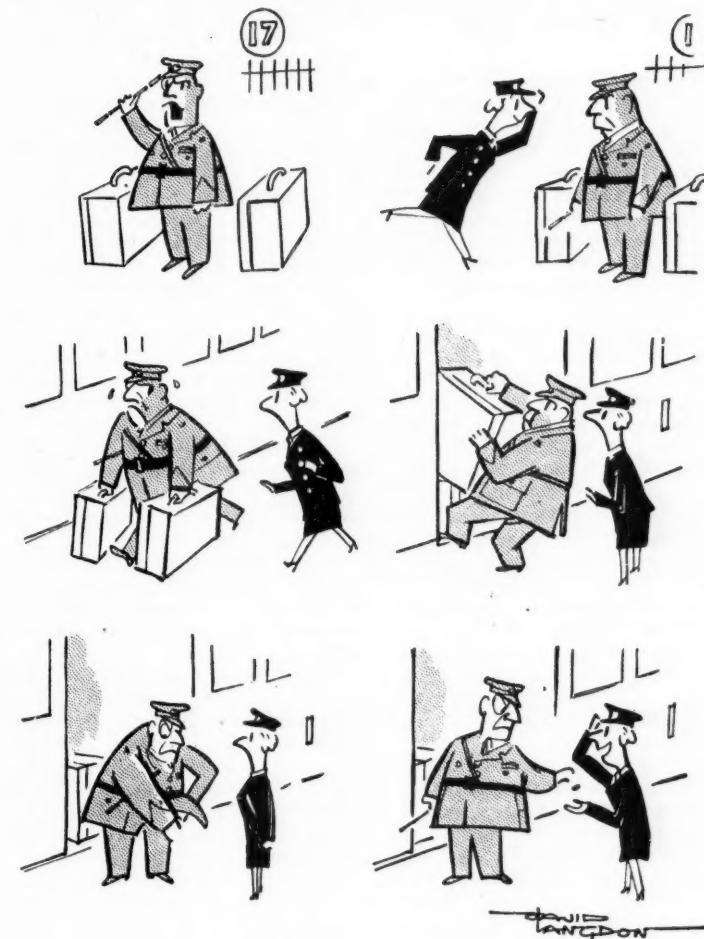
"Quite," admitted Beech, "but then Sympson hasn't given them a chance. You know how sleepy he is on first parade in the morning? More often than not he awakened suddenly when instinct told him his own name was about to be called and, too eager, answered for Symington. So nobody really knew which was which."

On the last day everything was very free-and-easy, and we mentioned to the C.S.M. how puzzling it was that Sympson had got through. The C.S.M. said that the marks given were kept secret, even from him, but that as it happened he was in a position to throw a little light on the subject.

"At the end of the first month," he said, "Lieutenant Beejuice always submits to Captain Bewley a brief summing-up of each cadet's general bearing. These reports were particularly important on this Course, because Captain Bewley was away on leave for the ten days before they were submitted, and as soon as he came back Lieutenant Beejuice went."

We nodded. It had seemed at the time a Providence that we were never subjected to Captain Bewley and Lieutenant Beejuice together. Exactly which is the more gimlet-eyed is a matter of opinion, but to endure the two together would be like living in a country governed by Cromwell and Napoleon in partnership.

"The reports were written out by Lieutenant Beejuice just before he left," went on the C.S.M., "and I handed them to Captain Bewley next



morning. I knew that Lieutenant Beejuice had been rather critical of Cadet Sympson. He had told me more than once that Sympson on parade reminded him of a bag of manure, and that he held a pistol as though it were a carrot. Imagine my surprise, then, when Captain Bewley glanced up from Lieutenant Beejuice's list and said 'I am glad to see that Cadet Sympson has made such a fine recovery after his shaky start.' As you know, I never like to see a cadet R.T.U., so of course I agreed, with as much enthusiasm as I could muster."

He paused, and then lowered his voice.

"I glanced at the list myself, and there, scribbled in Lieutenant Beejuice's writing, which is bad enough for a Brigadier at least, were what appeared to be the words 'good turnout.'"

We looked at Sympson, who had

been standing near-by, pretending not to be interested in the C.S.M.'s revelations. The words "good turnout" were the last we should have dreamed of applying to him. Lieutenant Beejuice's "bag of manure" seemed to us much nearer the mark.

"When Lieutenant Beejuice came back," concluded the C.S.M., "he was amazed to find Sympson still with us. It appears that what he had meant to write was: 'Goop. Turn Out.'"

Sympson said that the trouble with some people was that they thought it was clever to try to be funny; but the rest of us thought the story not nearly so unlikely as the alternative, that Sympson had got through on merit.

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Square Peg

"Miss Porteous, 21-year-old typist, told the tribunal that she 'objected to being dictated to . . .'—*Manchester Paper*.

The Short List

"SEE from *The Times Educational Supplement* that they are advertising the Upgrove job," said Charteris. "Anybody applying?"

Biggot shook his head. Pringle-Watt sneered. Cartwright and Harrison continued their game of chess against Evans. Charteris looked hurt.

"I don't think so," I said. "Not much in my line, you know. What is it worth?"

"Oh, about nine hundred," said Charteris. "Not half enough for a job like that. I wouldn't have it at any price."

After school I went along to the reading-room to obtain full details. The advertisement stated that applications were invited for the post of headmaster of Upgrove School; that the salary was £900, rising by annual increments of £25 . . . etc.; that application forms could be obtained from the undersigned . . . stamped and addressed foolscap envelope . . . fifteen copies of three recent testimonials . . . not later than May 1st . . . and that canvassing directly or indirectly would be deemed a disqualification.

I had purposely refrained from appearing interested in the job before my colleagues. Good fellows though they are, they are apt to ridicule any attempt to climb the ladder of fame.

Biggot, I believe, applied for the post of Principal at Cowlick many years ago. The affair is never mentioned to-day, but the poor chap was called "Mr. Principal" for years after his application had been rejected, and came near to committing suicide.

To become headmaster of an English school was my fondest ambition. The financial gain would be nothing compared with the joy of commanding attention and discipline merely by my presence. I had always longed to interview parents, to develop idiosyncrasies and to be able to stroll majestically into class half-way through a lesson and demonstrate the inexperience of the master in charge.

One thing troubled me. I had only two testimonials. The first was from my old school and ran: "John Sopwhittle has been at this school for eleven years and now leaves with the Cambridge School Certificate. He has been regular and punctual in attendance. . ." The other was from my professor at the university. Very diffidently I approached the Head with my request for a third. He seemed faintly amused.

"So you are leaving us at last, Sopwhittle," he said.

"No, no, sir," I said hastily; "merely a precaution we must all take in these days. One never knows, does one, when testimonials will be needed, sir?"

"Well," he said, smiling broadly, "if you go, you go. We shall be sorry to lose you."

His testimonial was, I must say, extremely flattering—especially the part which said: ". . . I feel that Mr. Sopwhittle will be comfortable on any staff and I cordially commend his application." My wife typed out the fifteen copies and I sent in my forms. For a week I was a bundle of nerves. Then I received a note requesting me to attend for interview on the following Saturday.

I was elated. I have always held the theory that my personal appearance and deportment are my chief qualities. An M.A. (Hons. French) looks well enough on paper, but when associated with a clean-limbed, middle-aged English gentleman in a neat pin-striped suit it becomes a factor of paramount importance. I was very confident.

When I arrived at Upgrove I was dismayed to find Charteris, Evans, Pringle-Watt and another man already seated in the waiting-room. My three colleagues wore pin-striped suits and their neck-gear was faultless. Pringle-Watt held his hat and umbrella in a manner to suggest a speedy departure from an unpleasant duty.

"My gawd," said Charteris, looking me up and down rather rudely, "what a pantomime!"

"Well, Sopwhittle, old boy," said Evans, "it looks like the job's yours."

"I don't see how you make that out," I said, "there are five candidates —by the way, you might introduce me."

I shook hands with Mr. Sidefoot of Rotherham.

"You needn't worry about me," said Evans. "I only applied because the place is near to St. Morbid's and I had nothing to do this afternoon."

"And I wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole," said Pringle-Watt. "They got me here on false pretences."

Just then a door opened and Charteris sprang to attention, fingered his tie and marched into the committee-room.

I turned to Mr. Sidefoot to ask if he wanted the job.

"Not particularly," he said, "but I suppose somebody will have to take it. How about you?"

"Well," I said, "I can't say I do. I only applied to use up some old testimonials."

Charteris came out. He seemed even more anxious than before not to become headmaster of Upgrove.

"The place is a veritable Chamber of Horrors," he said. "Four women on the staff! No, thank you!"

Sidefoot was next. Then Pringle-Watt and Evans and me. Finally we were all seated again waiting for the final recall. It was all rather terrible. Charteris was laughing harshly and trying to pull the heel off his shoe. Evans had beads of sweat on his brow. Pringle-Watt was nonchalant and Sidefoot was looking through the window.

Suddenly the door opened and a voice asked for Mr. Sidefoot. My colleagues laughed nervously. I swallowed hard and tried to keep back a flood of tears.

"Thank heaven for that!" said Pringle-Watt. "A close shave, you know. I could have had it like that" (snapping his fingers)—"I refused it, of course."

We all hastened to add that the job had also been offered to us. We were leaving the building when the porter stopped us.

"Ard luck, gents," he said. "I could 'ave told you the result a week ago. Unfair, that's what it is. They only called you chaps up to save expenses, being as St. Morbid's is so near. Red tape, that's what it is—'aving a selection committee when the bloke's already selected."

The committee may have saved something on travelling expenses, but the applicants from St. Morbid's did not lose. Indeed they gained enough to spend a pleasant hour in the Upgrove Arms where cynical toasts were drunk to the headmaster of Upgrove. Pringle-Watt was in excellent spirits.



New Girl

THIS is ghastly! I have been left all alone in this dark bottle-green office; they have gone away and left me with sombre ledgers turning their mottled faces to the peeling walls, with little trays of fluff-embedded paper-clips and sad tired nibs—not to mention an empty milk bottle and a brochure on Bones.

And of course the telephone. "Just mind the telephone," they said simply and with a kind smile. Good lord! if that is all they ask they can rest assured that never, never have I minded a telephone so much before.

What shall I do if it rings? I have resolved to take off the receiver and to say "Hullo"—that I have quite decided upon. Of course it is a wildly dashing move, but I am trying so hard not to forget that I come of a courageous family. I must remember my Great-Uncle Fred who fell on the Field of Waterloo, and rather cunningly didn't get up again until it was all over; and my Cousin Matthew who, binding a box of biscuits to his back, rescued a St. Bernard dog from a snowdrift at Obergürgl in 1892. Then there was my step-Aunt Mrs. Trilbey, who told the Queen of Italy that her petticoat was showing, and—but why go on? Sufficient to say that the family shield depicts a lion passant, a lioness rampant, with three lion cubs piquant over the top.

This is horrible! The suspense is awful! Supposing somebody from the Ministry of Health rings up and asks me what I propose doing about the newly-arrived cases at the Wootton-cum-Wenlock nursery. I'm sure that's just the sort of thing they do ask one. Well, I mean, I don't propose to do anything—no, absolutely nothing. It's simply stupid to ask me. Maybe I'd better switch the call through to . . . now where in heaven's name have I put that list? Mrs. Scott was it? Blast! I shall think of something else.

That is quite a nice poster of Mr. Churchill on the wall, but the very fact that it is over life-size causes a certain amount of soul-shrinkage, I find. With those enormous eyes fixed so zealously upon me I do not feel I am bleeding nearly enough. I am perspiring a good deal, it is true, and I am certainly staying put. But am I going to it? Are Mr. Churchill and I really going forward together hand in hand? As for there being no depression in this house, I ask you just to step right over my threshold and drop into almost bottomless concavity.

Supposing it's the Ministry of Food! I . . . now keep calm! Let us look at this map of Devonshire. Very nice. The flags are extraordinarily pretty too. Now isn't that ridiculous? I only breathed—well as a matter of fact I don't think I did breathe—and one of the flags fell off. I can't imagine where it came from. I shall stick it into Budleigh Salterton, because I like Budleigh Salterton, and it certainly ought to have a flag.

I wish to heavens somebody *would* telephone now! I feel as though I were on the eve of entering for some appalling examination, having previously failed to get a doctor's certificate for amnesia. I know nothing.

I wish I were picking cowslips.

Now, supposing it's the Ministry of Transport? Supposing an abrupt manly voice, a rough blue-chinned voice asks me whether the permits have come through yet. I think I shall say No, they haven't. Or shall I say Yes, they have? Which? Which? I never knew life would be like this. I was in love with it once; in fact I was in love with it only half an hour ago. I felt so safe and secure, with friends all around me to guide and cherish—I remember, it seems

another age altogether—I walked down the corridor humming "The Whistler's Mother-in-Law," and I smiled and nodded at the people I passed, and I wondered what I was going to have for luncheon, and I was trustful and childlike.

But they have betrayed my trust; they have taken away my childhood. They have shut me up in a dark room alone, without cause or question, and age is settling down upon me like dust upon the files.

Thinking of files, I'm not sure it wouldn't be the absolute bottoms if Mrs. Huxley rang up from downstairs and asked me to find her the file dealing with the Amalgamation of Ferro-Concrete Workers in Derby!

I wish I could have an acute attack of appendicitis.

I wish somebody was very ill and would ask for me.

I wish this something war would end.

I wish I was in the middle of a deep wood in the heart of the Catskill Mountains.

AH! It has come! The moment that I greatly feared is come upon me! Shades of my ancestors arise and hasten to my aid—Uncle Fred and Cousin Mat and dear, dear step-Aunt Mrs. Trilbey, stay by my side. "Hullo?" V. G.

○ ○

"Pork pies (diseased or otherwise) should not be thrown into waste-paper baskets in war-time."—*Daily Paper*.

Just another jolly little peace-time habit that we must give up for the present.



"Why not come home with me and take point luck,
old man?"



"I don't give a 'oot wot you was in civil life; you got to learn to cross a river on TWO wires—same as the others!"

Field Service Spring Song

(PADS OF 100)

SOME future day, I feel, is sure to
bring
An Army Form for Use in Greeting
Spring . . .

*Inserting Office Stamp and Date,
Complete all columns, striking out
Inapplicable words throughout,
And render in quadruplicate.*

Before the warm/cold/tepid breeze
The crocus/snowdrop bows its head,
And tiny shoots of green/brown/red
Appear on hedges/bushes/trees.

The blackbird/sparrow warbles/cheeps,
The skies above are blue/black/grey.
Beneath the kiss of April/May
The world awakens/dozes/sleeps.

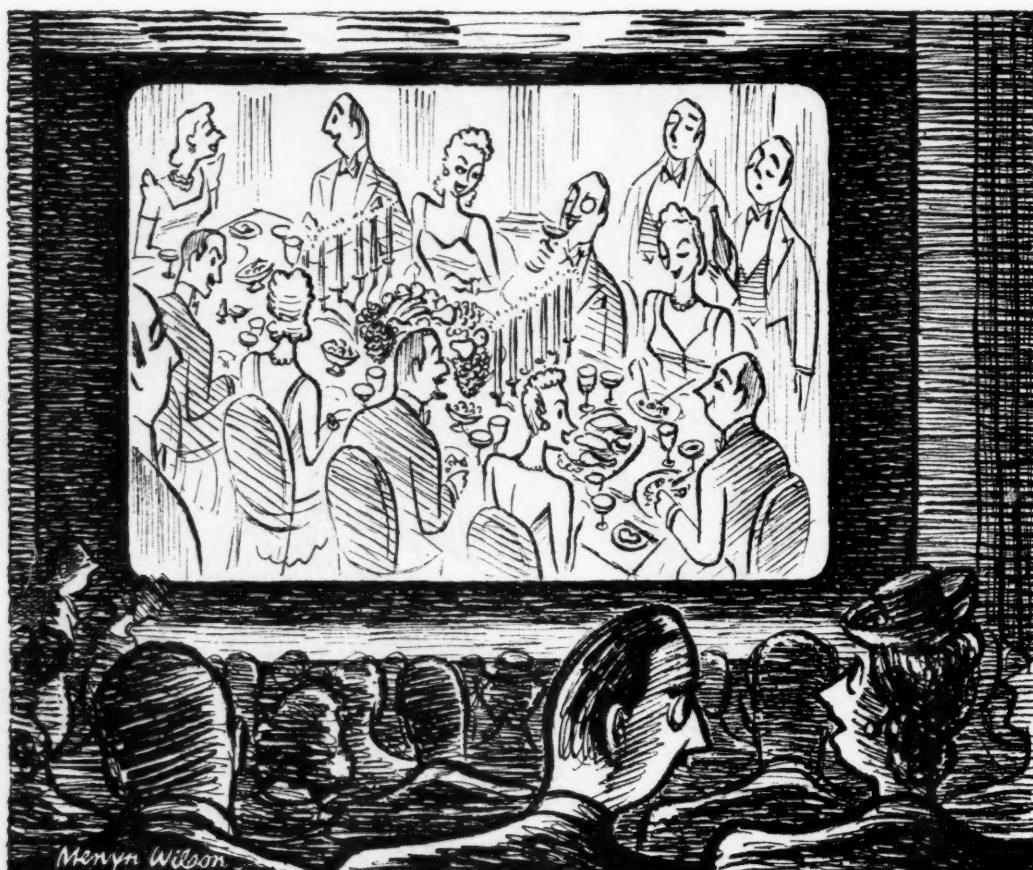
Love dons a new/old/part-worn dress,
And shepherd tunes his pipes/lyre/note
To charm/delight the ear/nose/throat
Of fair/dark/mousy shepherdess.

Summer approaches/goes/is near,
Winter departs/comes on/withdraws,
And Spring is/may be/will be/was/
Might have been/could be/is not here!



A CHANGE OF PROGRAMME

"Here, you! Get back! *I'm* the hunter, not you!"



"By the way, I managed to get some corned beef for dinner."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, May 19th.—House of Lords: Abecedarian Feat by the Lord Chancellor. **Lord Bruntisfield Makes His Maiden Speech.**

House of Commons: Hamlet Without the Prince—and Without Most of the Audience.

Tuesday, May 19th.—Mr. JAMES STUART, the Government Chief Whip, spent an anxious time to-day dashing around the House of Commons metaphorically slipping into each Order Paper a small notice to the effect that the management regretted that the star performer, Mr. WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER CHURCHILL, would not appear in "The Great War Drama" and that his place would be taken by his understudy, Mr. CLEMENT RICHARD ATTLEE.

With regrettable lack of business instinct the management had allowed

it to leak out in advance that this change in the cast was to be made, and this foreknowledge was reflected in the size of the audience.

Mr. ATTLEE has not precisely the same style or powers of oratory as Mr. CHURCHILL, and Members did not bother to put off their other engagements—including those with the catering department—when he arose to talk about the war. Mr. ATTLEE's audience was 140 at its greatest, 100 at its smallest.

Some members of the audience so far forgot themselves as to inquire aloud whether, if properly coaxed, the star would not consent to make a personal appearance, after all. Stage manager Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS did not add greatly to his reputation for tact by his reply that that would be a matter for the star.

The audience—all of it—lustily informed him that the patrons also had a say in this matter. Sir STAFFORD hastily

explained that he meant the star would form his own opinion about the extent of the clamour for his appearance.

Mr. ATTLEE then tripped lightly to the centre of the stage and began his speech. It was not startling. He spoke (vaguely) of the possibility of a second front which, he said, was also in the minds of the German General Staff. We must all do what we could to strengthen the country, not only in defence but in attack. War was not like a medal match in golf—great distances divided us from our enemies.

There was but little about the conduct of the war, and the audience slowly melted.

Apparently thinking it time to introduce a little life into the proceedings, Mr. ATTLEE started a long and fiery row with Lord WINTERTON. This was about the status of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and it revolved around the ability of that body to advise the PRIME MINISTER on strategy when the PRIME

MINISTER insisted on being present and thus overruling the other members.

All frightfully complicated, it was. Mr. ATTLEE got more and more icily excited, more and more red in the cheeks. Lord WINTERTON got more and more resolutely tenacious, and hung on like grim death the more the Deputy Prime Minister took "evasive action."

But in the end the row was stopped, and the House got down to its rather wearisome discussion. Little or nothing that was new emerged from the whole day's debate, and there was that oppressive "touring company" atmosphere about it all.

In the Lords, Lord SIMON, without turning a hair of his immaculate wig, told the admiring Peers of a (doubtless distressing) case where A had let coal to C, and then A had granted a lease of A's interest, subject to C's lease, to B for a longer period of years.

Noble Lords murmured their abhorrence of this deed, their utter inability to credit such conduct in a human being.

But apparently they need not have been so indignant, for the whole thing is to be put right by a brief, direct, pointed Bill which the LORD CHANCELLOR then proceeded to move. It would speedily put right the *casus*

omissus, and then all would be well, said Lord SIMON, beaming.

Lord GAINFORD, for the coal-owners, blessed the Bill, which received its Second Reading in a matter of a couple of minutes.

Continuing the process of tidying up the legal garden, Lord BRUNTISFIELD brought forward a Bill—a neat and natty little thing of half a page—to put right something that was wrong with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Not (Lord BRUNTISFIELD made clear) with the R.N.V.R. itself, but with the law relating thereto.

It seems that anyone who has served his three years with the R.N.V.R. can just walk out. That, of course, was never intended, and the Bill puts it right. Lord BRUNTISFIELD is now the spokesman in the Upper House for the Senior Service, and he made plain his sense of the honour that fact conferred on him.

This Bill too got its Second Reading at speed.

A discussion on Singapore and on the generation of hate for the Germans (the latter urged by Lord VANSITTART) filled the remainder of the day.

Wednesday, May 20th.—The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. TEMPLE,

was formally introduced into the House of Lords to-day.

The reintroduction meant only that he moved up one on the Bishops' Bench, but it was a picturesque (and therefore worthwhile) ceremony.

Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD opened the second day's debate with a tartly brief demand for the presence of the PRIME MINISTER "in view of the course of the debate yesterday."

Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, sweetly brief, replied that the PRIME MINISTER was not coming.

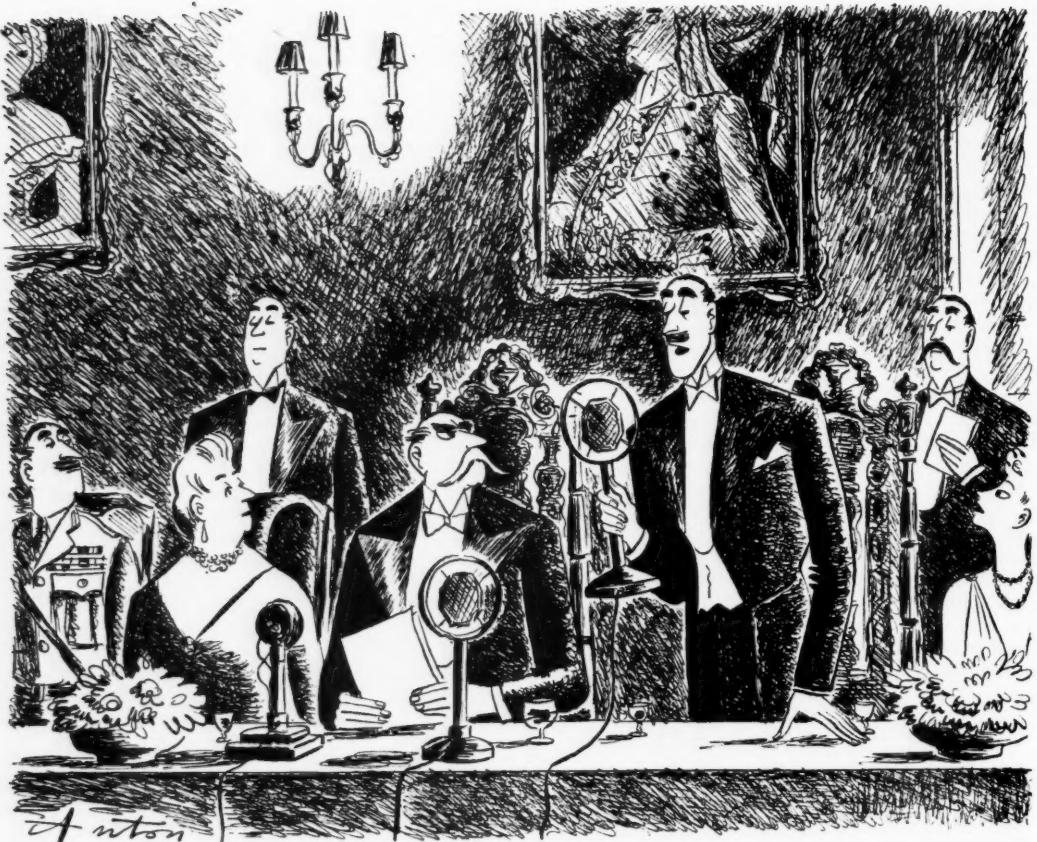
The House prepared to be tough, asked why. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS promised to tell them later, but the uproar broke out again and he blandly explained that Mr. CHURCHILL had nothing to add to statements he had already made.

Grumblingly the House dropped the matter and the debate went on. Few seemed to favour a compromise proposal put forward by Mr. AUSTIN HOPKINSON that the Prime Minister should be left to his tasks but that the Minister of Defence should be compelled to attend.

It must be recorded that the entire House seemed to share the inability of the PRIME MINISTER to "add anything to what had previously been said."



"Here comes the target for our last War Weapons Week."



"But before our distinguished guest commences his speech, I'd like to tell you something of importance."

Industrial Relations

IV

THIS article may well be the ante-penultimate, the penultimate or even the last of the series. If so—the discerning reader will know that either the Ministry of Information or the Editor has intervened. My disclosures relating to industrial unrest have already caused something like a revolution in Government circles and guilty men are searching frantically for a scapegoat. At any moment the Suggestions Box of the Snacker and Diplocket Small Things Co. (1928), Ltd., may be raided by armed bands of Civil Servants. If I am banished to the Grampians (I know that several members of the Cabinet are agitating for such a move) my readers may rest assured that I shall find new media for

the airing of their grievances. I have friends.

Here, then, is the authentic voice of Britain's war workers.

The first note comes from Mr. Charles Diplocket, managing director of the company. "I understand," he writes, "that my name and that of my Aunt Prunella are being sullied by the malicious gossip concerning our bombing policy. The gist of these libellous rumours is that the R.A.F. is forbidden to bomb the Hoi Polloi Dolls'-Eyes Factory at Tokyo on account of my influential representations on my aunt's behalf. It is true that my Aunt Prunella once held certain shares (8 per cent. Ordinary Deferred) in this business, but the increased duty on

whisky compelled her to realize all her foreign holdings early in the war. If this whispering campaign does not cease—and I look to you to stop it—I intend to discover the ringleaders and prosecute."

"When the delegation of Russian workers visited the factory a short time ago," writes O. D. Hazlitt, a shop manager, "various methods of stimulating production were discussed. In the Soviet Union those workers who achieve an exceptional output are honoured by the exhibition of their portraits on the factory walls. The scheme was tried here but results were disappointing. It was ruined by characteristic British levity. The first portrait to be displayed was soon

"...
cros
Not
exp

sub-scribed: '£50 Reward, Dead or Alive—Joe Smith alias Sex-Appeal Joe.' Two other workers, Mechanics 9904 and 0713, had their photographs mutilated by such vulgar aphorisms as 'The Lax-Tabs. Twins—before and after treatment.' While such examples of vandalism are regrettable they are indicative of the persistence of Britain's mental insularity. If some incentive is needed to draw the best from our workers it should appeal not to an alien hero-worship but to the traditional British team-spirit. My own idea is that the employees should be divided into four teams or 'Houses,' each with a distinctive colour and name—say 'Churchill's,' 'Eden's,' 'Bevin's' and 'School.' The house gaining most points each week might be rewarded by a few minutes' 'start' to the canteen."

The third note is obscure. It reads: "Malplaquet III, ten bob, win and place. Freddy."

"I wish to make a suggestion concerning the assembly lines in Shed 5," writes a Mr. Arthur Tenplate. "You will probably be familiar with the method of production. The priority tanks 59/7A are built up on the 'moto' belt system and are complete in every detail when they arrive at Shop 41 on the third floor. At this stage the tanks are dismantled so that their parts may be lowered through the window to the ground. If the production flow began in Shop 41—that is, if the assembly lines were reversed—the completed tanks could leave the building via the canteen and much time and labour would be saved. My plan is simple enough, but I think that such details are often overlooked by the efficiency experts."

The last note comes from a Mrs. O'Brien of Ipswich. She writes: "Have you any part-time vacancies in your overtime department? With seven children (three under five) I can not do full-time war work, but I should like to feel that I was doing my bit. Our curate, Mr. Feckless, has been good enough to promise to look after the children for three nights each week so that I could do a little overtime, which I understand is paid at a higher rate. If I am engaged I shall have to leave about 9.30 P.M. as the curate says he has to make another call before 10 P.M."

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"Although many globes making pedestrian crossings have been destroyed in raids . . ."

Manchester Paper.

Not by traffic, as you might have expected.

PUNCH or *The London Charivari*

Presentation

WE shall miss Snooth," said my hostess. "Day in, day out, whatever the weather, he was Prattle Parva's faithful postman for forty-four years. The Rector did not care for him, as Snooth's position as sidesman gave him the opportunity of interfering with church matters. Especially in giving unwanted advice. But he was a landmark and therefore interesting."

"How did the presentation go? I was sorry not to be there, but I must not miss a collecting-day. By-the-by,

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID:

NEVER in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

That famous and well-deserved tribute to the prowess and devotion of British airmen serves as a fitting reminder of the debt we owe to them. We can never repay them for all they have done and are doing for us, but through the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND we are able to meet some of their needs. Will you please help us in the good work by sending a contribution? Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

I have a new subscriber. Mrs. Jorbe, down by the withy beds."

"Dear, dear, that is very interesting. She intended returning to Prattle Parva when her great-niece by marriage, Mrs. Didd, had left the village. There was a dispute, in fact a quarrel which lasted fourteen years. They lived next door but one to each other. Mrs. Droppe has often told me how embarrassing it was for her, as Mrs. Jorbe and Mrs. Didd pursued their animosities over Mrs. Droppe's garden. In fact she told me that if there had been another cottage vacant and Droppe would have agreed to move away she would have left Huggs Lane. . . . However, Mrs. Jorbe emigrated to Canada and wrote expressing regret. . . . They are now reconciled and Amelia Didd is named after Mrs. Jorbe. . . .

"The presentation? It was highly successful. Mr. Doame, our Member, came down on purpose. He is always willing to conduct a local ceremony. It gives the occasion tone. . . . Mr. Doame quoted a passage from Shakespeare about old men who toiled and moiled all their sad lives and then dropped down dead in their tracks. I saw Snooth look strangely at Mr. Doame. Snooth looked very well in his purple-mauve suit he bought at Chubston's for his daughter's wedding.

"The Rector said a few words, and said how much he would miss his old friend. He expected Mr. Snooth would join a church at Woansome and take just as much interest in it as he had in Prattle Parva. He wished Snooth all the best. . . .

"Snooth replied and said he had worn out a hundred and twelve pairs of boots in His Majesty's service and had walked, I think he said, fifty-six thousand miles. Anyway, it was quite a distance. He said now he had the ear of the public he would like to say that, naming no names, he did think the farmers might have the gumption to understand that a box on the gate would save the postman trudging through the snow to put a seed-list in the front-door letter-box. There was one farmer, Mr. Subsell, who had an arrangement at his farm gate which was just right. Everybody looked at Subsell. He looked very pleased.

"Then Victor Oyle and Mr. Tumm carried in that armchair which had been in Chubston's furniture window such a long time. They told Snooth to sit down in it. He said he was ever so surprised at receiving a present and said with a bit of alteration it would do nicely. He thanked everybody and would think of us when he was sitting in his married daughter's parlour in Hoadle Terrace, Woansome. Everybody cheered and clapped, including the Rector. . . .

"Then Mr. Doame handed Mrs. Snooth an umbrella and said he hoped it would keep off the rain for the few years she had left to live. Mrs. Snooth blushed and said thank you, and she would put it away in a drawer because she never had and never would use an umbrella, but umbrellas being like gold and diamonds now with this dreadful war on, she would know its value. . . .

"A very interesting function. I think you would have enjoyed it. Certainly the village did."

Accommodation

THE room was empty. That room which only a fortnight ago had echoed to the laughter of fifteen fellow-N.C.O.s was now silent and deserted, unswept and ungarnished. There were no beds in it; not even one bed. It was with relief that I discerned the paunchy outline of my kit-bag, chained heavily to the supports of my wall-cupboard; I was proud to be reminded that my presence of mind had remained to me, even on my way to the Sick-bay. But I was homeless; I had nowhere to lay my head that night.

I went down to the Mess and mentioned this to several people.

Sergeant Ambleside laughed, recalling in some detail a similar experience of his own at X—; Corporal Bullwing told a story about his accommodation troubles at Y—; and Sergeant Croppett said he couldn't imagine why they had wanted to empty a nice room like Room 8, Building 7, adding that in his opinion the beer was getting weaker than ever.

I had to remind Sergeant Croppett (after asking how his wife was, and persuading him to have more beer) that he was N.C.O. in charge of Squadron Accommodation. This brought him down to earth, and he was kind enough to ask me where I was living now. I explained. He said that much the same sort of thing had happened just before he was posted from Z—, and he had been obliged to make himself up a bed in the Ablutions. If this was a hint, I ignored it.

Later in the evening he said that the Fire Guard bunk in No. 2 Block was vacant, if I cared to move in there. It wanted cleaning, but I could get a Fatigue Party on that. And it numbered a telephone amongst its attractions.

"I'll take it," I said.

So about 2130 hours I got my bicycle, hung my kit-bag, rubber boots, suitcase, respirator, haversack and violin all over it, and made my way to No. 2 Block. It was getting dark by the time I threw open the door of the Fire Guard bunk. I tried to open it in the ordinary way, but it had a hinge missing and had to be thrown.

I went in.

Like all bunks, it was a square little dungeon, palely lit by a 40-watt bulb. The smoke swirled away when the door was thrown into the room, and revealed two airmen sitting on stools

(actually chairs with the superstructure shot away), waiting.

"Corp?" they said, by way of greeting.

"Who are you?"

One, it seemed, was A/C Pringle, the other A/C Pratt. When I asked them what they were, they threw cautious glances at each other, and I produced my Form 1250 to establish my bona fides. They then confessed that they were on Fire Guard duty.

"All night?" I asked, looking at the solitary bedstead standing on end in a corner, its springs smashed and tangled like an attic tennis racket. They were indignant, declaring loudly that their watch finished at 2300 hours.

"Take away that bedstead," I ordered. "Go into the barrack-room next door and bring me a whole one, with biscuits and blankets to match."

"Corp," they said obediently, and shambled out in a cloud of dust.

While they were making up my bed, I took stock of my new home. There was a telephone, certainly. The

aperture in its base caused by the removal of the dialling fitting contained many stained cigarette-ends and half a tube of No. 2 Anti-gas Ointment. The light was poor, but I noticed that the walls had been plugged and de-plugged so that they appeared to have suffered from a severe dose of shrapnel. Against the wall was a radiator, but it wasn't connected to anything. It was just against the wall. The fireplace was filled with soot.

When I opened the wall-cupboard a fully-inflated rugby football rolled out and began to bound about the room with eccentric vivacity, but A/C Pratt threw himself upon it as it was trying to escape up the chimney. A/C Pringle assisted by throwing himself upon A/C Pratt, and between us we got it locked away again. I decided to investigate the cupboard in the morning, when there were fewer people about.

I brought in my kit-bag, violin, rubber boots, respirator, suitcase and haversack. There was not room for my bicycle. Then, instructing the representatives of the Fire Guard to stand by in the adjoining barrack-room, taking care not to disturb the sleepers therein, I emptied my kit-bag on to the floor, selected a pair of pyjamas, and went to bed.

I awoke with the feeling that I was not alone, and reaching up to switch on the 40-watt bulb I saw that two airmen were sitting on the stools.

"Pratt!" I said—"Pringle! Why have you come back?"

Then I saw that they were strangers. I talked with them. The Fire Guard, it appeared, would be in residence all night, reliefs reporting for duty hourly.

"Stand by in the barrack-room," I ordered. "I will stand by the telephone. If there are any fires I will inform you. Tell your reliefs that that is the new arrangement."

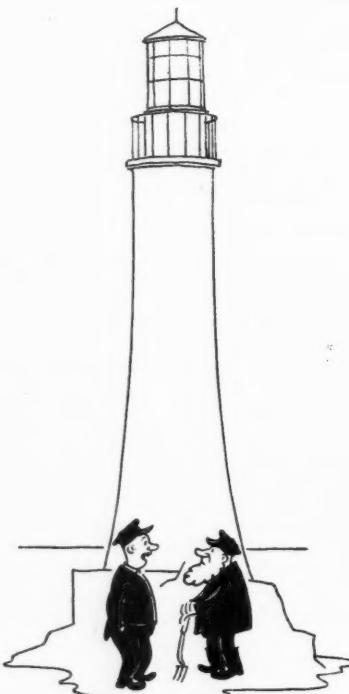
"Corp," they said, and made a self-conscious foot-movement suggestive of a spiritual attention position. It seemed a long time before they gave up trying to shut the door.

The telephone woke me.

"Is that one-three?" it said.

I said I didn't know, and the telephone became violent for a time, before asking if I was the Dental Centre. I told it.

I had several other calls at intervals. None of them was about fires, and three of them thought I was the



"Can't we have a change from runner beans this year?"

Exchange, merely wanting to know the time.

The Fire Guard reliefs came in regularly and woke me. I talked to them, explaining the new system. I asked them to tell their friends. When it was five o'clock by the Fire Guard reliefs I was thoroughly awakened by a loud explosion in the barrack-room. Somebody late back from leave had fallen through a bed. I made no inquiries into this.

I rose.

Returning from breakfast I found an athletes' convention in progress; a dozen men in shorts and singlets were laughing and smoking and sitting on my bed. The room was filled with cricket-bats, hockey-sticks, javelins and other tools of the Out-Training Staff. The Fire Guard men had been forced into a corner. The meeting broke up shortly after my arrival, and began to go away, leaving all its gear behind it. "What about all this stuff?" I shouted after a thickset man wearing blue shorts and half a blue battledress. He looked surprised. "We leave it every morning," he said.

Men then appeared with kit-bags, entering the room and standing about expectantly. "New arrivals," they said they were, and when I asked them what they expected me to do about it they pointed to a faded notice on the door. "New Arrivals," it said.

At 0800 hours the Class Instructors began to file in, looking at me curiously and leaving books, lecture-notes, haversacks, brief-cases and respirators. I was soon sandbagged in. Flight-Sergeant Binder gave me a searching glance and demanded to know what I was doing there. "I live here," I said, and he answered, "Ah?" in a meaning tone.

At 0830 hours a man from the barrack-room tried to bring his bed in (I recognized it easily) and take mine away. At 1000 hours I was put on a charge by the N.C.O. supervising Outdoor Training for being in Improper Possession of one Rugby

Football, the Property of the Air Council. At 1200 hours I spoke to Sergeant Croppett again.

"There's only a tent," he said. "The guy-ropes are rotten and it lets water. It's miles from anywhere. You'd be quite out of touch."

"I'll take it," I said.

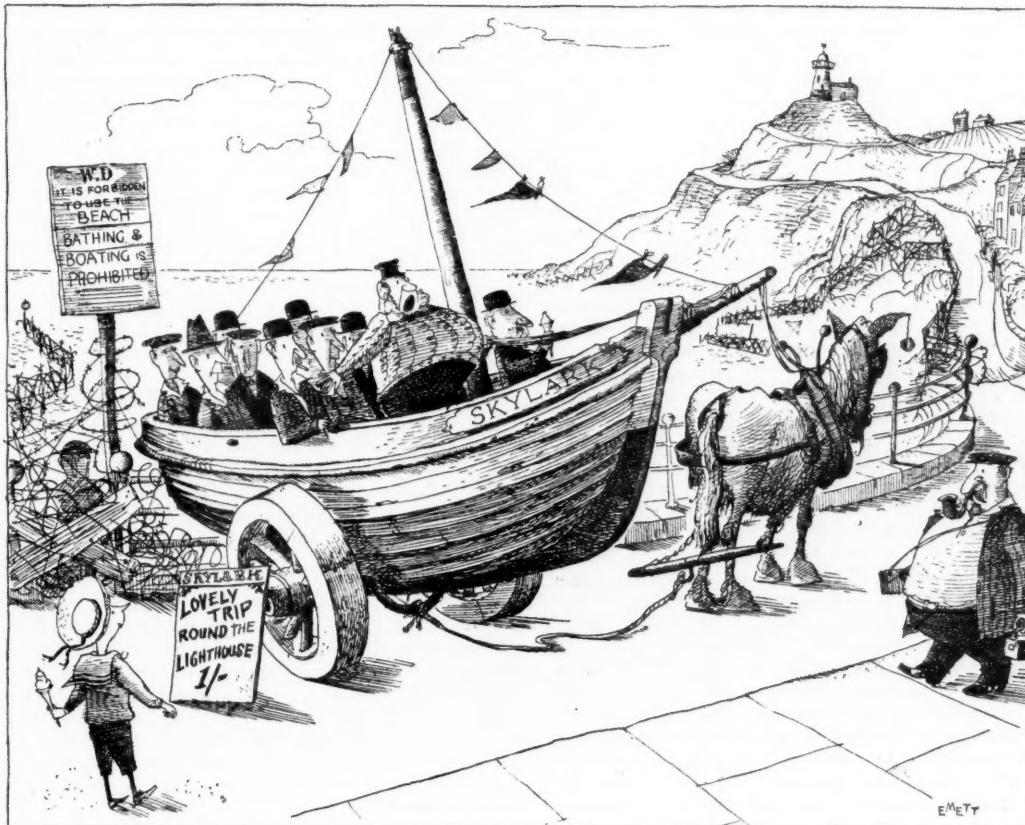
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Come, Commando, Come!

COME, Commando, come!
Come under cover to land,
No splash on the water,
No sound on the sand.
The moon is dark and the night is
dumb,
Come, Commando, come!

Go, Commando, go!
Slip through the harbour guard,
Soft-foot as the puma,
Swift-foot as the pard.
The prize is high and the tide is low,
Go, Commando, go!

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



Our Booking-Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Some Historical Novels

SIR WALTER SCOTT, the inventor of the historical novel, did not trouble himself overmuch about accuracy. His RICHARD CŒUR DE LION wears plate armour a century or so before it was invented, and his SHAKESPEARE is middle-aged and well thought of by QUEEN ELIZABETH at a time when, by rights, he should have been creeping like snail unwillingly to school. DUMAS was even more carefree than Scott. His *Athos* receives secret instructions from CHARLES I on the scaffold, and his *d'Artagnan* restores CHARLES II to the throne of England. After DUMAS came the age of science and realism, and when, towards the close of the nineteenth century, historical novels began to be written again their authors tried to combine realism and romance; CONAN DOYLE, for example, filling numerous notebooks with details of mediaeval habits before he wrote *The White Company*, which is in consequence much less readable than his detective stories, and no more lifelike. Since CONAN DOYLE, the taste for what is nowadays called "documentation" has grown steadily, and few historical novels at the present time appear without an assurance on the wrapper that the author has stuck to all the available facts.

God's Warrior (by PATRY WILLIAMS, FABER, 9/6) is a story about ST. DUNSTAN. The authors (there appear to be two of them) make use of the accepted idiom for romances about our rude Anglo-Saxon forbears. Their language varies between the stark directness proper to a society of cross-gartered thanes and the plain poetry of a simple age. Here is stark directness—"When he rode into Winchester he was all grim; for there the streets of the town were littered with refuse and muck." Here is plain poetry—"The land was lapped in peace. Fields and flocks were thriving; and in the ports men worked to build new ships, singing as they hauled." With a stirring plot to carry this style, all would have been well, but unfortunately the main concern of the authors has been to rival the professional historian. They have tried to reconstruct the age, sociologically, politically, economically and theologically, the sources on which they have drawn ranging from Old English and Latin chronicles to a German treatise on Anglo-Saxon laws. All this erudition has submerged such action and characterization as the authors have from time to time attempted to insert, and the erudition itself suffers from not having a plainer setting; a straightforward account of an Anglo-Saxon abbey, to give one example, being more satisfactory than information obliquely conveyed by an imaginary "Egilric the steward," who informs some stray visitors that the abbey needed a larger sick-house, a bathroom, a granary and more stables, with rooms above them for the slaves.

Miss FLORENCE BONE, too, we learn on the wrapper of *Crimson Sunrise* (STANLEY PAUL, 9/6), has stuck to the facts in her story of GUY FAWKES. "With the exception of likely servants and passers-by," we read, "every character in this tale really lived." The trouble is that they do not live again in Miss BONE's pages. One need not be a Catholic to feel that GUY FAWKES is hardly worth writing about at this late date from a standpoint which assumes Sir ROBERT CECIL to have been a large-souled patriot, entirely indifferent to his own interest and given to brooding on England's future greatness as an Empire. A case can be made out for GUY FAWKES—most people have felt at any rate a momentary impulse to blow Parliament up—but Miss BONE takes the traditional view of him as a dark-souled sinister conspirator.

Once or twice she relents a little—"I wonder why I hate November," she makes him muse as a boy. "'Tis a fearsome month with all winter before a lad"; and towards the end there is a note of sympathy in "That fourth of November was a very long day to Guy Fawkes." But her final verdict is unsparring—"Traitor to England, betrayer of his friends."

Mr. HUGH Ross WILLIAMSON is not a romance writer who aspires to be also an historian, but an able historian who has had the unlucky notion of trying his hand at a romance. The Puritan Revolution has interested him for some years. He has written studies of JAMES I, of GEORGE VILLIERS and of JOHN HAMPDEN, and is preparing a book on CROMWELL and CHARLES. In *Captain Thomas Schofield* (COLLINS, 9/6) he has chosen one of the most critical periods in the Puritan Revolution, the fifteen months from July 1647 to October 1648, and has given an account of them which is vivid in its details and illuminating in its interpretation of the forces which were in conflict with one another. The real hero of the book is the Puritan democrat RAINSBOROUGH. RAINSBOROUGH mistrusted CROMWELL as extreme revolutionaries always mistrust the man who turns a revolution into a despotism, with himself as despot. "He was Cromwell's only possible rival," Mr. WILLIAMSON writes, and though few people will share Mr. WILLIAMSON's view that, but for his sudden and violent end, RAINSBOROUGH would have got the better of CROMWELL, Mr. WILLIAMSON's account of him is most interesting and, of course, fully documented. But why *Captain Thomas Schofield*? Why the intrusion of this totally unnecessary phantom, conversing with a gipsy woman in the mysterious darkness of midsummer night?

H. K.

Which Hand Will You Have ?

With Faith, as with the wonderful one-hoss shay, it is the weakest place must stand the strain; and only in fiction does one discover those lop-sided saints who keep such commandments as they please (with a perfection denied to the more orthodox) while ignoring others. A highly artificial opposition of faith and works is the mainspring of Dr. A. J. CRONIN's robust but rather crude novel *The Keys of Heaven* (GOLLANCZ, 9/-). His villains, *Monsignor Sleeth* and *Bishop Mealey* (villains, one notes, have names suggestive of villainy), sin, with a shocking want of humility and charity, against the light. His hero, *Father Francis Chisholm*, does deeds of supernatural heroism in a spiritual fog. *Father Chisholm's* episodic legend begins in the Scots parish from which, at sixty, he is to be evicted. The sixty years, most of them a living martyrdom on the China mission, are next recounted. And the climax—kindly but incredible—should be read to be discovered. Much of the book's destructive criticism of ecclesiastical foibles would be useful enough to the *Sleeths* and *Mealeys* who will, in the nature of things, never encounter it. Its inspiring heresy—that personal religion will flourish like a toadstool on the decay of dogma—is only too popular with the novel-reading public already.

H. P. E.

Man of Destiny

The moral giant who at school was so successful in refusing to work at subjects he found uninteresting that he passed into Sandhurst only by the utmost exercise of the crammer's art, yet who three or four years later became an acknowledged authority on military history, surely had ways of educating himself not known to the commonalty. Inveterate rebel, uncompromising thruster, man of impudence—and of prayer—this rasping scholar who irritated to frenzy all whom he did not draw within the circle of his

charm, has known all his days that no bullets would stop him or any failure finally disallow his advance until his task was finished, and he has shaped his course unhesitatingly on that assurance. In Churchill—*The Making of a Hero* (GOLLANCZ, 10/-), ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD is so fiercely determined to say no smooth things that this brilliant essay might even seem at times to be a little spiteful were it not for its unimpeachable conclusion. No study of the Prime Minister's career is possible without much dipping in the shadowy pool of party politics, but honest portraiture hardly seems to demand the denial of political sincerity—and denial not without an element of party bias at that—to nearly all the Parliamentarians of the last half century. After all, even CROMWELL did not ask to have the warts exaggerated. This, however, goes for little against one's appreciation of the writer's clear and relevant objective. Here is a book written to show how through the fiercest kind of life-long battling Mr. CHURCHILL has been hammering himself to heroic form, and in the effort has won the secret of shaping and sustaining the heroism of a nation. C. C. P.

Weather

The average Englishman's interest in the weather is personal rather than scientific. It is his own weather, urban or rustic, "a foul day" or "a nice rain." Weather that reduces him to a cipher—the weather of the Physical Geography of a rather nauseating aspect of his youth—doesn't, as a rule, arouse his enthusiasm; and that is why *Storm* (HUTCHINSON, 9/-), which is an American treatise on weather disguised as a novel, will probably fail to arouse much interest in these more masterful and less (meteorologically speaking) overmastered islands. Mr. GEORGE STEWART's hero is a junior meteorologist and his heroine a twelve days' tempest fantastically christened by that expert "*Maria*." *Maria* starts as "an incipient little whorl" off Japan, travels round a third of the globe, and winds up an apocalyptic career of destruction in America. Incidentally she overwhelms a courting couple, nearly drowns the superintendent of a colossal dam, and does drown, effectively, a large boar whose death-throes interest the annalist far more vividly than those of the courting couple, because the boar's corpse succeeds in blocking up a culvert. Scrappy in treatment and depressing in its inhumanity, the legend of *Maria* might well, one feels, have been left to the statistical and technical authorities so lavishly listed in the dedication.

H. P. E.



MAFEKING NIGHT
(Or rather 3 A.M. the following morning).

Voice (from above). "GOOD GRACIOUS, WILLIAM! WHY DON'T YOU COME TO BED?"
William (huskily). "MY DEAR MARIA, YOU KNOW IT'S BEEN THE RULE OF MY LIFE
TO GO TO BED SHOBER—AND I CAN'T POSH'BLY COME TO BED YET!"

Phil May, May 30th, 1900



"But, darling, perhaps there won't be any Brains Trust when you grow up."

Exchange and Mart

ISUPPOSE you don't know anyone who has got a tricycle that would do for Jane?"

"My dear, that's exactly what I do know. Lesley Stuart has one that her Peter has grown out of, but she wants to exchange it for a bicycle."

"Well, my sister-in-law has got a lovely bicycle that John can't use now. But she won't sell it. She will only exchange it for gin or a raincoat."

"I think I can get her some gin."

"Darling, that would be marvellous! How would that work out then?"

"Well, I'd buy the gin and take the bicycle in exchange."

"But you don't want a child's bicycle."

"No, my dear, but then I'd swap it with Lesley for her tricycle which I'd then swap with you for something else."

"Grand. Now what do you want in exchange?"

"Well, I suppose you wouldn't consider parting with that madly smart tweed suit you had last autumn—the one with the green velvet collar?"

"My dear! that old rag? I'm sick to death of it."

"Are you really? But that's marvellous!"

"With coupons, I suppose?"

"My dear, not a hope."

"Darling, I'm terribly afraid I couldn't let it go without coupons. You see, it's almost new. And Pip is going to a boarding school next term and has to have a complete new outfit, my dear."

"But, my sweet, don't you know that Sonia's revolting little child, who is just about the same size as Pip, has glands or something, and anyway his entire school trousseau is going begging?"

"No, I didn't. Does Sonia want to get rid of them?"

"But madly. She will sell the whole kaboodle for a motor-mower."

"Well, that would be splendid, because we've got potatoes on the tennis-courts, so she could have one of our mowers easily."

"Then suppose you did that in exchange for the school clothes for Pip, could I have your tweed suit without coupons in exchange for Lesley's tricycle, having given Lesley your sister-in-law's bicycle in exchange for gin?"

"Darling, it's too simple."

M. D.



"And when were you first conscious of this—er—feeling of slight nostalgia?"

Sunday Inspection

THE rule against talking shop in the Mess is not being strictly obeyed. Lieutenant Tinkle says that this is all right under King's Regulations because the bar is not open. You can tell that the bar is not open because you have to tap softly on the shutter and whisper instead of rattling your money on the counter and calling out cheerfully.

Lieutenant Crashier, of the Commandos, has just shown us a rather laughable way of gouging a man's eyes out. Little Lieutenant Wiggle, on whom he demonstrated, wants to know how you put them back, but Lieutenant Crashier says that this does not come under him.

Second-Lieutenant Whoopit, who commands the Alliance Knitting and Forwarding Co.'s Works Unit, is drawing out his works defence scheme in spilt beer on the table. Thriftier

drinkers are moving their beer off the table because it looks as if he is going to need rather a lot. Second-Lieutenant Whoopit says that where they went wrong at Corregidor was in depending too much on big guns, but it seems that he has got over that.

Captain Gollop says that it puts him in an awkward position as the senior officer present, having to drink with a lot of subalterns who really ought to be at their posts waiting for the G.O.C. to turn up. Lieutenant Tapper explains again that it will be quite all right because he has posted signallers at each road block, so that while the General is being held up and having his 2806 examined and the photograph compared, so far as it is reasonable to expect men to do it, with the face, thus proving how efficient the battalion is, the signallers will be flashing a code word to the roof of a

nearby building whence it will be relayed instantly to the station outside the Mess window. This will give everyone time to nip back. Lieutenant Tapper says that his signallers have been practising this for weeks and have achieved perfection. It is what is called a Vic-Edward message in the trade.

One or two of the younger and more sentimental officers admit that this shows that signalling could be made useful if persisted in, and seem inclined to offer Lieutenant Tapper a drink.

Lieutenant Crashier says that when strangling people we should never, never knot the wire. It seems that beginners often fall into this error, thinking it dressy or something, but nothing looks sillier to an experienced strangler than to see a man having to fumble about and undo his wire before using it again.

Captain Gollop says that his landlady has just discovered that he is Liaison Officer in Home Guard life and has forbidden her daughters to speak to him.

Lieutenant Bumper, as Battalion Transport Officer, is explaining the War Office scheme for allowing Home Guards to keep tyres on their cars. It seems that you only have to promise to keep the car licensed and in decent order and garage it at Battalion Headquarters at the C.O.'s disposal. The C.O. will then, rather decently, promise that no one but Home Guards will drive it. Lieutenant Bumper says that some officers have been a bit shabby in trying to shuffle out of paying the insurance. Nothing makes Battalion Headquarters madder than this, as it means that they have to fill in forms. Anyhow, Battalion Headquarters only want the better kind of car.

Second-Lieutenant Whoopit is still holding out on the table, and while the German, Italian and Japanese High Commands have retired for the moment, baffled, he is explaining how it was that the mine did not go up when the carriers' van backed into the tank trap last Tuesday. It seems that

it came into the trap the wrong way, no doubt through lack of training.

Lieutenant Crashier is showing us how, if you make a prisoner lean with his hands on a wall three or four feet away, you can cut his trouser-buttons off without fear of any funny business. Lieutenant Wiggle, whose eyes are still sticking out a good bit, proves this by cutting off Lieutenant Crashier's buttons while he is showing us the stance. Lieutenant Crashier is behaving very ominously with his strangler-wire while a cordon of officers is trying to explain the joke to him.

The G.O.C. seems quite surprised to see us all. So does the C.O. And we are all surprised to see the G.O.C. I think we had expected a kinder, more fatherly-looking man. His face is very red. Perhaps he is blushing at having sneaked in on us like this. The C.O. is putting a face on it by explaining that we have been on duty all night and are hurrying through a late breakfast in the hope of being in time for the inspection. Perhaps he is going to treat it all as a joke afterwards. If so, someone ought to tell him that he is wearing the wrong expression by mistake. Lieutenant Wiggle has upset

a tankard of breakfast and overrun the defences of the Alliance Knitting and Forwarding Co.

A signaller has put his head round the door and reported: "Code message 'Gorilla' just received."

The G.O.C. is asking the C.O. what code message "Gorilla" means.

A. M. C.

Eccentric Soldier

SOME soldiers carry,
When they're apart,
The portrait of a girl
Next to the heart.

But one young soldier—
Does it seem silly?—
Carries the portrait
Of a thoroughbred filly,

A thoroughbred filly,
Dainty and trim;
And he wouldn't care a bit
If you laughed at him.

A. W. B.



"And now, you, Sir—for how many days after Mr. Churchill's recent broadcast did YOU carry your gas-mask?"

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